

RELIGION AND POLITICS : THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon

Guru Nanak Dev Mission Series—414

Published by Guru Nanak Dev Mission, Patiala

Price : Rs. 6-00

First Edition 1100 Copies

1992

Printed at : Lok Awaz Printers, Sunami Gate, Near Modi College,
Patiala

Preface

This study is an attempt to bring into focus the true nature of Sikh ideology, not in its isolation, but in the light of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and the broad historical perspective. Attempts have been made to trace the origin of the Sikh doctrine to the earlier religious traditions and to split it into various strands, linking them to earlier sources. This has led to many distorted versions and erroneous interpretations of Sikhism. An impartial historian must view the revealed Sikh doctrine in its totality, and not in fragments.

The basic tenets of the Sikh faith have been clearly laid down in its scripture, *Guru Granth*. In the Sikh world-view, there is no place for the doctrine of illusion (*Maya*) and the resultant renunciation, escapism or pessimism. One of the positive features of Sikhism is the welding of the spiritual and the temporal aspects of human existence. The Sikh Gurus viewed the world of sense and form as true and valuable. They stressed spiritual devotion combined with social responsibility. According to their integrated vision, the social is a religious responsibility and the religious has to be expressed in the social. Religion, thus viewed, could be an effective vehicle of promoting the values of social harmony, love, equality, freedom and brotherhood of man.

Absence of moral element has been the bane of Indian politics, more especially, in the recent years. The so-called divisions between religion and politics, under the camouflage of secularism, is nothing but a ploy to put an end to all diversity and dissent. In the process all principles of justice and fair play are being sacrificed.

Recently the Akali Dal has come under sharp attack for combining religion with politics. The ideals of a community spring from its past tradition and have deep social and historical roots. In the long and highly cherished Sikh tradition of *Miri* and *Piri*,

initiated by the Gurus, and the consequent heroic ideal of *Sant-Sipahi*, one supplements the other and makes for a stable and just polity. A religion which preaches the message of universal brotherhood has no scope for narrowness and fanaticism.

Sikhism, to-day, is passing through a crucial phase. The Sikhs are struggling hard to maintain the identity, unity and integrity of the great Gospel handed down to them by the Gurus. The Khalsa was created for the very purpose of upholding *Dharma* (righteousness). Imbued with his ideal, the Sikhs have been in the forefront to make sacrifices for the defence of the universal and national causes. Unfortunately, When they try to defend the interests of their community, they are dubbed as fundamentalists, secessionists and communal. In this study an effort has been made to examine the socio-political relevance of the Sikh faith.

I must say a word of thanks to my little daughter, Puneet, who bore with me, during this laborious work.

Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon
Reader in History, P.U.E.C.
Sector 14, Chandigarh
1st December, 1989

RELIGION AND POLITICS : THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE

GURDARSHAN SINGH DHILLON

What is the role of religion in relation to human society ? Can a religion be altogether abstract and other-worldly ? Can there be a clear demarcation between the boundaries of the spiritual and the empirical ? Are the two realms entirely separate and incompatible ? Or can there be harmony between the two ? Is it right to ask the Sikhs to separate religion and politics ? In the present study an attempt is made to seek answers to these questions.

The most important task before us is to find the answer the Sikh Gurus give on the issue of combining religion and politics. For this purpose, we shall deal with three aspects of the issue. The first is the ideological answer given by the Gurus in their *Bani* in the *Granth Sahib*. The second aspect is the history of their lives and how they have conducted themselves in relation to the ideology they prescribe. This aspect will also indicate the kind of society the Gurus organised, the nature of institutions they built and the targets they laid for that society. The third aspect is how the Sikh society has lived and stuck to these ideals in its history during the post-Guru period.

Inseparability of religion and politics has been one of the chief characteristics of Sikhism. Want of a clear perception of Sikhism has led to many controversies and misconceptions regarding this doctrine. Sikhs, as a religious and cultural group have been in a minority, yet they have played a significant role in the Indian affairs, out of proportion to their small numbers. It is so because of their unique historico-political position and their spiritual and social vitality bestowed upon them by their faith. The Sikhs have had to pass through great ordeals to preserve their strength and distinctiveness.

Before the advent of Sikhism, Islam was the only religion which welded the spiritual and the temporal into a harmonious

whole.¹ The Christians believed in a dichotomy between the Church and the State. For the Buddhists, there could be no 'Nirwana' for those who did not withdraw from the phenomenal world. Vedanta, too, held out no hope of liberation for the worldly life. Among the Hindus, the hierarchical character of the social structure was an integral component of the spiritual system, causing a serious deterioration in the position of Vaishyas, Sudras and women, with no hope of redemption. Guru Nanak's spiritual message had an inalienable social content. It sought to establish equality between man and man and reconciliation between the religious and the secular, as a means of achieving the most harmonious blending of a life of love.²

Sikhism, a revelatory religion, originated in the 16th century as a new revolutionary force, aimed at the spiritual rejuvenation, moral upliftment and the social emancipation of people³. On the one hand, it confronted the dogmatism and religious formalism of the priest-dominated and caste-ridden society⁴ and on the other it challenged the political oppression of the contemporary rulers.⁵ It introduced new modes of thought, gave new content and orientation to the existing categories and formulated new concepts of man's relations with God⁶, his role in society and the goal of human life. In due course of time, the inner values of the Sikh faith got more and more crystallised and became no less real than the more visible outward forms.

In order to arrive at a correct evaluation of the ideological and practical implications of Sikhism it is essential to understand the Sikh way of life and some of its key concepts of the World, God, 'Dharma' and society, which became the moving impulse of a people. The vibrant Sikh community has had a long tradition of inseparability of religion and politics. This inseparability is implicit in the basic postulates of Sikhism and must be viewed in its true perspective.⁷

The Sikh Gurus did not look upon this world as illusory or unreal. This world is said to be 'the home of the Supreme Lord, wherein He Himself dwells'.⁸ The Sikh ideology is basically

governed by the kind of God the Gurus define and envisage. There are innumerable verses in the *Granth Sahib* giving the attributes of God. Sher Singh in his book, 'Philosophy of Sikhism', has devoted almost a whole chapter to this subject. But for our purpose a few salient features are relevant. According to the Sikh Gurus, God is both Transcendent⁹ and Immanent.¹⁰ Guru Amar Das acknowledges the world as a creation of the Lord. A vital concept of Guru Nanak's philosophy is that 'through visualising nature one is convinced of the existence of God'. The Guru's assertions about the immanent aspect of God are to stress the spiritual and meaningful character of life and universe and its capacity for relationship with God. The term transcendent describes Him as 'wholly other'¹¹. The immanent aspect indicates that He permeates this world and reveals Himself through His creation.¹² This gives relevance, authenticity, sanction and direction to the entire spiritual and moral life of man and his institutions and goals. It also emphasises God's nearness to man and His deep and abiding interest in the world.¹³ In the *Mul Mantra*, Guru Nanak visualises God as creator-Father (*Karta Purkh*) whose will (*Hukam*) constitutes the autonomous moral order on the empirical level of existence. The Hindu view is that Divinity can be malignant as well as benign and careful propitiation is more urgent than a request for favours.¹⁴ Guru Nanak's concept of God is of a Benevolent and a Gracious Being, who helps the erring according to His innate nature.¹⁵

Further, Guru Nanak says that He not only creates the world but also watches His creation with a benevolent eye, being happy about it and directing it with His Will.¹⁶ God is called the ocean of virtues and He is milk to the child, eyes to the blind and riches to the poor, besides being shelter of the shelterless, help to the helpless¹⁷ and destroyer of the tyrant. In short, the God of the Gurus is deeply interested in the world and is directing it with His Will towards righteousness and a moral order. It is in this context that Guru Nanak prescribes the rôle for a true man. In the *Japu ji* he categorically answers this question by saying that the wall of falsehood can be broken only by carrying out God's will.

And His Will being attributive, the role and ideal for the true man (*Sachiaara*) is clearly laid down.¹⁸ A similar answer is given by the Guru when asked about the nature of God. He replies that God is ineffable but the only thing he could say was that He is All Love.¹⁹ And God's love can be expressed only in a becoming world and for man and life. Therefore, clearly and logically, the ideal the Gurus prescribe for man is of love for his fellow beings, namely, it is an ideal of an active spirituo—moral life in this world. According to this concept, God is interested in all aspects of life and following Him the Sikh Gurus, and consequently their disciples, accept in toto life and responsibilities in all aspects.

Sikh religion is a religion of the householder. 'Householders and hermits are equal, whoever calls on the name of the Lord'.²⁰ Guru Nanak believed that the pious hermit and the devout householder are one in the eyes of God. He rejected the path of the recluse and the ascetic, who sought alienation from the world of sense and form. He declared that 'do not touch at all the feet of those who call themselves *Guru* and *fakirs* and go about begging'.²¹ For him there can be no love of God without active service.²² Renunciation or withdrawal from life, which at that time was an integral part of the Indian religious tradition, had no place in the teachings of Guru Nanak.²³ So much so that Guru Nanak set aside the claim to Guruship of his son, Sri Chand, since he had exhibited ascetic tendencies. Guru Amar Das emphatically declared that the Sikhs had nothing to do with the *Udasis*, a sect of ascetics.

It is not our object to detail the spiritual thesis of the Gurus but the salient points valid to our subject have to be noted. Four aspects of social responsibility having been logically envisaged by the Gurus. Withdrawal from life have been rejected, the householders life becomes a natural corollary and this is what the lives of the Gurus show. The second consequence of this responsibility is granting the equality of status to women. We are aware that in religions recommending *Sanyas* and monasticism, woman has been deemed to be a temptress or is generally downgraded.

Guru Nanak was the first man of God, who questioned this view and said that how could we downgrade a woman when, without her, there would be no life.²⁴ The second part of the responsibility is the equality between man and man. Guru Nanak, therefore, emphatically condemned the concept of discrimination or stratification of any kind. The importance he gave to this aspect of his responsibility is clear from the fact that his first activity after his enlightenment was to choose a low caste Muslim as his first companion during his mission. This was something unthinkable in those times. Thirdly, Guru Nanak clearly recommended the idea of work and sharing as the path to a spiritual life.²⁵ He condemned the ascetic and the mendicant who did no work and begged their food. The fourth aspect of the householder's responsibility is to react against every wrong to one's neighbour or a fellow being because love of man becomes an empty slogan if the spiritual man does not go to the succour of the suffering and the victimized.²⁶ The important point is that all these principles of life were laid down by Guru Nanak himself. That Guru Nanak's thesis was entirely opposed to the religious views of his times is evident from his dialogue with the Sidhas as reported by Bhai Gurdas. The Sidhas asked him how he was claiming to tread the spiritual path, while living a householder's life. The Guru's reply was that the Sidhas were not acquainted with even the elementaries of spiritual life.²⁷ Again it is Guru Nanak who in a way epitomises his thesis in the following words. "Higher than everything else is Truth (God), but higher still is truthful living."²⁸ In following the path of righteousness, a Sikh carries out His Attributive Will. In short, the Sikh ideal is not isolation from the world or merger in the Absolute or a kind of individual *Mukti* or salvation. All his life he has to follow the path of deeds and that is the methodology prescribed by the *Gurus* i.e. both the goal and the methodology are different from those indicated in the earlier Indian religions.

Sikhism is qualitatively different from Hinduism and other religious philosophies and practices, both in its metaphysical postulates and social dynamism. In the quest for mysticism, Indian

experience had been one self-negation and self-abstraction on the psychological level.²⁹ On the political level, it had been one of passive acceptance, a kind of self-surrender, a fatalistic capacity for suffering, that centuries of persecution had shaped. What the Indian mystics preached was usually a means of other-worldliness, a lament on life's futilities rather than a programme of reconstruction of the world-order. They deemed the amelioration of man's social condition unworthy of any religious thought. The quietistic Hindus, who bore everything with placid calmness were not able to bear the challenge of activist Islam. Guru Nanak propounded a positive philosophy of life and world affirmation and brought about a far-reaching transformation in the outlook of the people.

Islam and Sikhism are religions of deed and others of word and interiority. Sikhism is not concerned with divinity in abstraction from human reality. It holds out the ideal of a multi-dimensional human personality, which actively seeks and realises the fullest expression of all the faculties latent in man. This all-embracing ideal assumes active responsibility for the world in which man lives and operates. Inner fulfilment can be attained along with commitment to the demands of the outer world, here and now. Thus the dichotomy between the world here and hereafter, between the physical and the metaphysical, between the empirical and the sacred, is broken. Such a view advocates a healthy blend of the two realms. A Sikh must lead a life of activity and action, moral and just, and not of mere contemplation. Three cardinal principles of Sikh faith are *Kirt Karo* (work with one's own hands), *Vand Chhako* (share the fruits of your labour with others) and *Nam Japo* (contemplation of God's name). Guru Arjan says :

*"One can achieve liberation,
Even when participating in life,
Laughing, playing, wearing finery
and eating delicacies."*³⁰

Sikh religion is not restricted to prayers and worship of God in personal solitude. It is connected to the day-to-day issues of

the life of man. Religion, as viewed and practised by Sikh Gurus, is not an individual affair. It enjoins upon the Sikhs the cultivation of all those spiritual, moral and ethical virtues which enable man not only to elevate and liberate himself but also to help in the elevation and liberation of his fellow human beings. According to the Sikh way of thinking, it is not legitimate to ask whether it is a religious or a political idea, for no such dichotomy between the religious and the political exists therein. Life to a Sikh is an integrated whole and its rules are laid down by the Guru, who unites and synthesises the different segments.

Sikhism envisages a comprehensive view of human life and seeks improvement in moral and ethical standards without which it is not possible to attain the spiritual goal. Mere mystical quest is not the Sikh ideal. The Sikh Gurus felt that religion, in the true sense, must fulfil its obligatory social function.³¹ It must uplift man, both individually and socially and enable him to grapple with the practical issue of human life-moral, social and political. Spiritual insight into the nature of things should lead to an enlightened understanding of the phenomenal world. The highest ideal of human life does not lie in escapism, self-negation or socio-political alienation. Gurus brought true religion to bear upon the day-to-day problems of life. Religion thus viewed is not merely a set of abstract ideas concerning God and the mystery of life and death. The realm of religion is widened to cover man's worldly concerns and social responsibilities. H. R. Gupta writes, "Nanak's religion was not a system of philosophy like Hinduism. It was a discipline, a way of life, a force which connected one Sikh with another as well as with the Guru".³²

The Sikhs are no run-aways from life. They assume active responsibility for the society in which they live. They cannot be silent spectators to any act of injustice, violation of human rights or exploitation. The Gurus envisaged a new world, based on the ideals of equality and fraternity, freedom and fearlessness, peace and harmony. They not only preached these ideals but also gave a practical shape to them. The twin institutions of *Sangat*

Pangat, started by Guru Nanak, are the living examples of the ideals of unity and human equality preached by him. The Guru laid stress on love, peace, harmony and tolerance. God in Sikhism is viewed as an embodiment of love and grace.³³ Among the divine attributes required of a Sikh are fearlessness (*Nirbhai*) and rancourlessness (*Nirvair*). A Sikh is advised 'to hold none in fear, nor to suppress or oppress the others.'³⁴ Sikhism does not permit any compromise with fear.

The Sikh concept of peace is quite different from the Gandhian concept of non-violence. Gandhi advocated passive resistance or passive suffering but such a policy can be pursued only to rouse the conscience of a certain type of adversary. A Sikh is not supposed to submit to fear merely for the sake of maintaining peace. Peace at all costs, is not worth having. However, the fight must be peaceful to begin with but when all other means fail, one is justified in taking up arms. But fight in the true sense of the word must not be for narrow selfish gains. It must be for the sake of 'Dharma' or righteousness. In Sikhism the word 'Dharmyudh' does not stand for fight for one's personal benefits. It signifies a much higher ideal—a fight for a just and true cause. Sikhism attaches great significance to peace but at the same time it holds that justice, righteousness, freedom, harmony and honour cannot be compromised to buy peace. A Sikh is enjoined by his religion to lead a dynamic life, to keep himself strong and fit, to wear arms but to use them with restraint, only in aid of righteousness.

The Sikh Gurus fought against the political-cum-religious persecution of the Mughal rulers. Guru Nanak, an apostle of peace, justice and harmony, through his verses, raised a strong voice of protest against oppression, and an unjust social order. He made very harsh comments on the abuse of political power and policy of religious bigotry followed by the Mughals. As a man of God, the Guru could not remain indifferent to the act of aggression and tyranny to which the people were being subjected. About the sharp social consciousness that characterised the Gurus,

Niharanjan Ray writes, "Any student of Sikhism and Sikh society cannot fail to notice how the Sikh Gurus, especially Guru Nanak, Guru Arjun and Guru Gobind Singh, were very sensitively awake to and critical of not only the social but also the political abuses and consequent miseries of people, which is another aspect of their attitude of social criticism and protest."³⁵ Castigating the ruling class of the day, Guru Nanak called "the rulers ferocious tigers and their officers hounds".³⁶ He worked not only for religious uplift but also for social regeneration. "The followers of Guru Nanak could no longer be a mere fraternity holding advanced views on religion and attempting to work their ideals through some recognised institutions of their own but their outlook perforce had to be broadened and made to take in its purview all important aspects of social life."³⁷

In the above context, let us see what Guru Nanak did. He accepted the householder's responsibility and even after his long missionary tours he lived a householder's life, doing a peasant's vocation. Again it was he who started the institution of *Langer*, with the dual object of eliminating discrimination between man and man and bringing food to the poor. Caste and pollution prejudices were a major curse of the social life of the times. Guru Nanak took tangible steps to eliminate these prejudices in the society he created. In the political field, he condemned the misrule of the establishment and oppression of the invaders. He not only identified this socio-political problem but he took clear steps indicating his objective and the target he laid down for his society. Political evils can be undone only by an organised society. Any individual effort in this field can hardly be of any meaning. Therefore, he took three steps which were at clear variance with the path other religious leaders had trodden. He did not just preach for individual salvation. In fact, he positively organised a *Panth* and a society, which was to be conditioned with new motivations and values. Secondly, he started the institution of appointing a successor so that his society could be organised, developed and new institutions created, so as to face the socio-political challenges and shoulder the necessary responsibilities in that regard.

Ahimsa (non-violence including vegetarianism) has been an integral part of the religious life in all earlier Indian religions, including Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnism etc. Even Bhagat Kabir has been recommending strict practice of *Ahimsa* because of the dichotomy between the religious and the socio-political life.³⁸ *Ahimsa* always has been an integral part of the Indian religious man, since he was never supposed to dabble in the socio-political sphere. But, since in the ultimate analysis, quite often, the solution of political problems involves the use of force and since Guru Nanak clearly envisaged a political life for his society, in defence of righteousness and in opposition to oppression, it was he who clearly eliminated this hurdle of *Ahimsa* for his *Panth*. Guru Nanak says, "Men discriminate not and quarrel over meat eating; they do not know what is flesh and what is non-flesh or in what lies sin and what is not sin."³⁹ In the whole hymn, he exposes the cant of non-meat-eating and the allied doctrine of *Ahimsa*. I *Babar Bani*, Guru Nanak deplores the brutality of the invaders and the unpreparedness of the local rulers. He goes to the extent of complaining to God, as the guardian of man, in allowing the weak to be oppressed by the strong.⁴⁰ In doing so, he was not just blowing hot air, nor was he suggesting to anyone to perform a miracle. He was in fact laying down one of the basic principles of his religion where under he not only sanctioned the use of force for righteous causes, but also prescribed that it was both the duty and the responsibility of the religious man and the society he was creating to resist aggression and brutality. History clearly records that meat was cooked in the *Langar* in the times of Guru Angad [Bhalla, Sarup Dass; *Mehma Parkash* Part II (Language Dept. Patiala, 1971 PP. 49, 64)]. This clarification given by Guru Nanak has a far reaching significance in indicating the course of life and its development the Guru envisaged for his society. It is in this light that we have to see the course of Sikh history in the Guru period. It is this contrast between Guru Nanak and the earlier religious leaders that it especially pointed out by Niharanjan Ray, "He (Guru Nanak) gave them after many centuries a system of ideas, images and symbols and a set of discipline all in precise and clear terms and in a very coherent and consistent manner."⁴¹

It was Guru Nanak who challenged the conventional yardstick of religion and led the path of universal love and emancipation of man. The call for this revolutionary mission was given by him in unambiguous terms : "If you want to tread the path of love, then enter upon my path with your head on your palm. Once you set your foot on this way, then find not a way out, and lay down your head."⁴²

The Guru thus kindled the spark in human nature that inspired men to suffer and make sacrifices for the cause of truth and justice. In a religious milieu, marked with negative and complacent trends, the Guru's positive message of social and religious uplift assumed great significance and relevance. Through his words and deeds 'he laid the firm foundations of institutions and trends which flowered and fructified later on.'⁴³ To call Guru Nanak a mere reformer is to underestimate the dynamism of his creative vision—a vision in which the timeless and the temporal blend beautifully and evolve a new and saner path for humanity. Sir Muhammad Iqbal paid the most befitting tribute to the Guru when he said, 'A man of perfection woke Hind from its world of dreams.'⁴⁴ In the words of John Clark Archer, "there was something positive and realistic in his (Guru's) life—something which Punjab, at any rate, could utilize and make permanent in religious and political reconstruction."⁴⁵

Our subsequent narration of the development of the Sikh society will show that, in view of the combination between the spiritual and the empirical in the thesis of Guru Nanak, the later Gurus have been developing the Sikh society not for any individual salvation as an end in itself but for the salvation of the society as a whole, with the religious individual as an integral component of the spiritual society they were creating.

Angad, the second Guru, fortified the Sikh identity by adopting Punjabi language as the vehicle of communication in religious as well as day-to-day life. The Guru was opposed to mendicancy and parasitical living. He earned his own living by twisting coarse grass into strings used for cots. Guru Amar Das

emphatically declared that 'the active and domestic Sikhs were wholly separate from the passive and recluse *Udasis* (a Hindu cult).'⁴⁶ There was a clear drifting away from the orthodox Hindu fold. The Guru established twenty two new centres or parishes for conveying to the people the message of Guru Nanak. They administered both to the religious and secular needs of the people.

The fifth Guru, Arjan, took some very important steps for the consolidation of the Sikh Panth. He compiled the *Granth Sahib*⁴⁷ and built the Harmandir and came to be looked upon by his disciples not only as the light or *Satguru* (spiritual guide) but also as *Sachcha Padshah* (The true King). The assembly of his followers came to be known as '*Durbar*' or court and his seat a '*Takhat*' or throne. It was on this account that the Harmandir also came to be known as *Durbar Sahib*, which emerged as a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating institution. In the words of G. C. Narang, 'the Sikhs had already become accustomed to a form of self-government within the empire. Their power and prestige had increased and they were fast becoming a factor in the political life of the province.'⁴⁸ The use of words like '*Sachcha Padshah*', '*Durbar*' or '*Takhat*' was thought to be fraught with dangerous motives by the State, which could no longer look upon the growing strength of the Sikh community with indifference. "The expression (*Sachcha Padshah*) could be adopted to any circumstances and its mytic application seem to have preyed upon and perplexed the minds of the Mughal princes."⁴⁹ One of the charges levelled against Guru Arjan by Jahangir was that he had called himself *Sachcha Padshah* or the true King and was an aspirant to sovereign power.⁵⁰

The Guru had a well organised central establishment which included the maintenance of a contingent of horses and elephants. He paved the way for the military organisation of the Sikhs that was to follow from the time of the sixth Guru. It was during the life time of Guru Arjan that his son and successor Gurm Hargobind started learning how to wield the sword and going on trips for hunting. Daljeet Singh points out that, "Guru Arjan's multifarious

activities, apart from making a very major contribution to the organisation of the mission, demonstrate, as laid down by Guru Nanak, that no field of life, whether secular, social or political, is excluded for the operation of a mystic. Slowly but surely, the movement came out with a distinct identity of its own with clear-cut religious and socio-political facets."⁵¹

Guru Arjan's parting message to his people reveals a resolve to fight, a recourse to arms, which gave Sikhism an urge to carry on its mission with fresh vigour. "I have succeeded in affecting the object of my life. Go to my son, the Holy Hargobind, and give him from me an ample consolation. Bid him not to mourn me, nor indulge in unmanly lamentation, but sing God's praises. Let him sit fully armed upon the *Gaddi* and maintain an army to the best of his ability. I bear all my torture to set a good example to the teachers of True Name, that they may not lose patience, nor rail at God in their affliction. The true test of faith comes in the very hour of misery."⁵²

The Guru's words stirred the Sikhs to a grave concern of their plight. The mood to take up fight soon became noticeable, "some ploughshares were being beaten into swords and there were pruning hooks becoming spears."⁵³ Guru Arjan was tortured to death and became the first martyr of the Sikhs. Thus 'a situation was arising in which a conflict between the forces of the State and those of Sikhism was becoming more or less inevitable. The State could not but regard the Sikh organisation as one of immense possibilities which might at one time become a rallying point of disaffection.'⁵⁴

Guru Arjan's successor, Hargobind, was fully aware of the new socio-religious challenge with which he was confronted. The Sikhs must be armed to defend themselves, he thought, and be ready likewise for offence, if necessary. At the very time of his installation as Guru, he directed Bhai Buddha to amend the ceremony followed on such occasions and adorn him with two swords of *Miri and Piri*, signifying the blending of religious and temporal authority. He told his followers: "My rosary shall

be my sword belt and on my turban I shall wear the emblem of royalty."⁵⁵ He made it clear that worldly pursuits were quite compatible with the deepest religious spirit and highest piety and to bear arms in defence of righteousness was a paramount religious duty. The Guru organised an army and by winning continuous victories showed his followers the possibilities open to their race.

Here it will not be out of place to record a meeting which took place between the Guru and a Maharashtran saint, Ram Das, who said that he found it difficult to comprehend how Guru Nanak's successor carried on his spiritual pursuits along with being a soldier and maintaining an army. The Guru replied that Guru Nanak had given up mammon but had not renounced the world. He clarified that the sword was for the double purpose of protection of the poor and fight against tyranny.⁵⁶ This reply left such a profound impression on Sant Ram Dass' mind that he undertook to train the Maratha leader Shivaji, on the same lines.

Some of the people committed and conditioned to old traditions and doctrines found it difficult to understand the full implications and the true character of the military development in Sikhism. Some historians, who do not have a clear perception of the integrated spiritual thesis of Guru Nanak, have viewed the spirituo-political organisation of the Sikhs as a departure from the original tradition. But as already seen, the steps taken by Guru Hargobind were simply the visible, natural and inevitable outcome of the doctrine of the combination of the spiritual and the empirical, laid down and founded by the first Guru.

The Akal Takhat, which symbolises the unique doctrinal position of double sovereignty of the Sikhs, was built by Guru Hargobind as a seat of the temporal authority, as distinct from the place of worship. He also set up two flags fluttering before it, one distinctly signifying the religious and the other temporal authority. Such steps were fraught with meaningful portents for the future.⁵⁷ The Durbar Sahib thus became a visible symbol of what the predominant form of Sikhism had become.

The Sikh ideal of blending the sacred and secular fully blossomed in the life of the ninth Sikh Guru, Tegh Bahadur. His name signified 'Hero of the Sword'. Moving from supreme spiritual awareness to supreme sacrifice, the Guru practised his spiritual ideal to counter the forces of tyranny and injustice. His was a living example of fusing the timeless spirit with the spirit of history, of harmonising the self-enlightenment with the urgent demands of the world without. Once a deputation of Kashmiri Brahmins waited upon the Guru and complained to him regarding the excesses committed by the Mughal Governor of Kashmir. After patiently listening to the tale of woes narrated by the Brahmins, the Guru is said to have remarked that in order to put an end to Mughal tyranny, it was necessary that a great man should come forward to sacrifice his life. Guru Gobind Singh, who was merely a child of nine at that time, promptly remarked that none was more worthy than his father to make this sacrifice. The Guru was very much struck by this remark of his young son and made up his mind to sacrifice his life. Here it is important to state one fact. Aurangzeb had specifically conveyed to the Guru that he would even give aid to the Guru if he confined his activities to the religious sphere and did not dabble in political matters⁵⁸. The Guru definitely declined his offer and continued his spirituo-political activities in espousing the cause of the Brahmins and the freedom of man to practice his religion.

The Guru was arrested and executed. "Sacrifice your head but do not desert those whose hand you have taken as a protector, but do not give up your Dharma (righteousness)" exclaimed the Guru⁵⁹. The Guru's execution was a sacrifice to uphold the righteous cause that strengthened the resistance against the policy of religious persecution, followed by the Mughals. It was a major landmark that paved the way for the growth of Sikhism.

The revolution stemming from the creative vision of Guru Nanak reached its highest pitch under Guru Gobind Singh, who started the final phase of the development of Sikhism in the Guru

period. Through his prophetic vision, the Guru had imbibed the spirit of a free, creative and spiritual life. As a true saint, his moral reaction to the policy of persecution was reflected in the will to resist and sacrifice. Pulsating with human love and spiritual robustness, the Guru responded to the crying need of the hour to restore justice and harmony in the human affairs. The Guru created the Khalsa—a disciplined body of the Sikhs. This gave them a distinct look, a community name, Singh (Lion) and symbols, the five K's—*Kesh* (uncut hair), *Kangha* (comb) *Kera* (steel bangle), *Kirpan* (Sword) and *Kasha* (short reeches). The inner unity of faith was strengthened with external uniformity. The Guru also furnished the order of the Khalsa with the institutions of '*Panj Piara*' (Five Beloved ones) and *Daswandh* (voluntary contribution of one-tenth of one's income to the exchequer of the *Panth*). The succession of personal Guruship also ended with Guru Gobind Singh. Henceforth, the function and authority of the Guru was vested in the Granth Sahib and the corporate decisions of the community, the *Khalsa Panth*. Thus, the spiritual sovereignty was bestowed on the Granth Sahib and temporal sovereignty on the *Panth*. The Guru brought "a new force into being and released a new dynamic force into the arena of Indian history."⁶³ He raised the Indian spirit from servility and self-prostration to the dynamic ideal of heroic resistance against tyranny.

Inspired by a divine mission to right the wrongs of the world, the Guru exhorted his followers to come upto his ideal of *Sant-Sipahi* (Saint-Soldier). Surcharged with such inspiration, a Sikh was urged to combine in him the virtues of a saint and the strength and sternness of a soldier. 'Take the broom of divine knowledge into thy hand and sweep away the filth of the dirty'⁶⁴ said the Guru. In his army, each Sikh called himself a unit of one lac and a quarter. The Guru aimed at creating a nation that would be pure and strong enough to free itself from the oppression of the rulers and priests. Guru's fame for holiness, wisdom and bravery attracted large crowds. Among his supporters was also a Muslim saint called Pir Buddhu Shah of Sadhaura who understood and

admired the spiritual status of the Guru because of his ideological affinities. He also sent his followers and sons to help the Guru. Two of his sons died fighting on the side of the Guru⁶³ Here it is noteworthy that no Hindu saint or spiritual man came to the Guru's aid, on account of the ideological gap between Sikhism and the earlier religious traditions.

In fact, the Hill Rajput Rajas, worshippers of the Devi-cult, actually spurned the offer of the Guru to join him in fighting the Mughal oppression, because they felt that the Guru's mission of establishing equality and anti-Durga ideology was opposed to their *Dharma*. Rather they fought against the Guru and invited the Mughal forces to suppress him. These historical events, thus, on the one hand clearly establish the ideological contrast between the mission of the Guru and the faith of the Hindu Rajas, and on the other hand the evident ideological affinity between the cause and ideals of the Gurus and the Sufi views of men like Budhu Shah, Mian Mir and others, since in Islam too *Miri-Piri* are combined.

It was under the tenth Master that Sikh ideas on religion society and politics got crystallised finally and governed the subsequent development of Sikhism. For called into being because of the Will of God (*Agia Bhai Akal Ki, tabi challo Panth*), the Khalsa was also to be His agent in the world to restore justice and righteousness (*Khalsa Akal Purkh Ki Fauj*). Guru Gobind Singh's trifacial doctrine-(a) individual is the true source of power. (b) he is an end in himself and must never be enslaved and expended by others and (c) prosperity and happiness, in ever-increasing measure, is the birth right and destiny of mankind-left an indelible mark on the Sikh tradition. Martyrdom of the Guru and his sons, for the cause of righteousness, was unique in the annals of mankind.

In the ranks of the Khalsa complete equality was practised. All were equal, the lowest with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights and in religious hopes. It is noteworthy that four out of the five *Piaras* were *Sudras*. This complete contrast with earlier religions is epitomised in the *Nash* doctrine of the Guru which enjoins on a Sikh to make a total break with earlier

traditions, ideologies and practices.⁶³ He resolved upon awakening his followers to a new life and upon giving precision and form to the broad and general institutions of Nanak. "In the heart of a powerful empire he set himself to the task of subverting it and from the midst of social degradation and religious corruption, he created simplicity of manners, singleness of purpose and enthusiasm and strength for the cause."⁶⁴

The above history of the Sikh *Panth* in the Guru period is a clear fulfilment of the spiritual thesis of Guru Nanak, which envisaged the creation of society for the maintenance and promotion of righteousness. The history shows that Guru Nanak had outlined the structure and laid down its foundation. The subsequent Gurus developed the various institutions that were essential for the growth and well-being of such a religious society. The Gurus, by their lead, clearly demonstrated how to make sacrifices to achieve their spiritual and socio-political aims. When the society became mature enough, the tenth master gave it a final organisational shape clearly defining by his personal leadership and the institution of *Panj Piarses*, the spiritual ideals to be aimed at, the social structure to be maintained and the socio-political ideals to be fought for. At the end of the two centuries, 'the Sikh faith had become established as a prevailing force and guiding principle to work its way in the world.'⁶⁵ The subsequent history of the Sikh society and struggle has to be seen and understood in this light.

The man chosen by the Guru to conduct the final phase of the Sikh struggle against the Empire was Banda Singh Bahadur, with an advisory council of noted Sikhs, including a living *Piara*. He was a wandering ascetic, who finding the futility of his path, entered the fold of the tenth Master and beseeched him to enrol him as a member of the Khalsa. The Guru roused his dormant spirit and put it into practical application. He conferred on him the title of Banda Singh Bahadur and appointed him as his military lieutenant. Banda attacked and defeated the Governor of Sirhind, who was the spearhead of Mughal oppression in the area, involving the execution and death of thousands of Sikhs and

Hindus. He defied the mighty Mughal empire and won a series of victories. He liberated the country from the oppressive Mughal rule by destroying it root and branch. He made Sikhism so popular with the people of Punjab that more than one lakh persons embraced Sikhism and became the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh in about a year, not through the force of arms but because of the inspiring deeds of the Khalsa. Banda Singh remained cool even in the face of death and none of his 740 followers, who were arrested with him, renounced his faith to save his life.⁶⁶ His defeat was not due to any weakness in him or in the cause but due to the overwhelming might of the Empire and odds against him.

Banda brought about a social revolution by appointing sweepers and cobblers as big officers and breaking down the barriers of caste.⁶⁷ He abolished the feudalistic *Zimindari* system and replaced it with peasant-proprietorship, making the actual tillers of the soil its masters.⁶⁸ This eventually led to the emergence of the masses, as the dominant section of Sikh society, giving it both firmness and cohesion. In contrast, Hindu society, because of its hierarchical caste structure and resultant economic disparities, has been known to be elite society, with an increasingly wide gap between the ten per cent rich and about 50% below the poverty line.

Banda occupies a unique place in history. Hari Ram Gupta, the eminent historian, calls him a great spiritual and political genius.⁶⁹ His achievements, both in the political and military fields, are indeeds phenomenal because he virtually shook the very foundations of the Mughal empire, never to be established again and brought about a socio-economic revolution in the masses, unheard of earlier.

Let us briefly recapitulate our narration which seeks to bring out clearly and emphatically the combination of the spiritual and the empirical life and how the acceptance of social responsibility, including political tasks, becomes an integral part of Sikh religion and the society. It was Guru Nanak who not only laid the foundations of the Sikh society but also clearly set before his

successors and his society the spiritual mission of bringing about equality and justice in the social field and combating oppression and aggression in the political sphere. Seen in this context, the role of each Guru in promoting the spiritual mission of Guru Nanak and creating and constructing with a singleness of purpose Sikh social institutions becomes quite evident. Except to persons burdened with old pacifist ideas or accepting the divorce between the spiritual life and the empirical life, the clear growth of a people, with a new scripture and a new faith, charged with a new mission, becomes perceptibly and prominently obvious to every student of the lives of the first four successors of Guru Nanak. In the times of Guru Arjan, he had not only formed a state within a state and given a scripture to the Sikhs and created a centre of their faith, but the direction he gave to his society was clear and bold enough to arouse the fears and suspicions of the great Mughal to provoke him to take the step of executing the fifth Guru, so as to nip the political ferment in the bud. It is indeed unfortunate that what the emperor of the day could clearly perceive and discern is not understood by some of the present-day historians. To-day there is no doubt that Guru Hargobind's wearing of two swords, on the very day of his installation as the Guru, was the result of a specific direction from the fifth Master. Similarly, Guru Hargobind's military struggles and the construction of *Akal Takhat* and the raising of the flags of *Miri* and *Piri* in the courtyard of Harmandar Sahib, are just symbolic of the combination of spiritual and empirical lives in the ideology of Guru Nanak. Since that time, the pursuit of the ideals of combating simultaneously, both political oppression and social inequality has continued unabated. The ninth Guru's declining the offer of Aurangzeb for help, if he confined his activities only to the spiritual sphere, and his martyrdom and the tenth Master's creation of the *Khalsa* epitomises the development of the Sikh society to a level of maturity. It is in this context that we understand, on the one hand, Guru Gobind Singh's closing the succession and on the other hand, vesting the Guruship in the *Shabd* (Scripture) and entrusting the pursuit of the mission to the *Panth*. In this background, let us proceed to the pursuit of Sikh mission in the 18th century.

Eighteenth century was a period of complex socio-political turmoil when the Sikhs embarked on a historic mission, entrusted to them by the Gurus to meet the challenge of suppression. They lived precariously and had to undergo unprecedented suffering. There was a price on every Sikh head. But they displayed unparalleled courage, endurance and fortitude and waged a valiant struggle against the worst political persecution of Mir Mannu. Their unflinching faith in the ultimate success of their mission is epitomised in the well-known slogan : Mannu is the sickle, we are the grass; the more he cuts us, the more we grow.⁷⁰

The consequences of this heroic struggle, in the socio-political life of the country, were significant and far-reaching. It stemmed, once for all, the cruel and imperial tide of oppression which had been threatening to destroy the Indian society for the past one thousand years. Apart from upholding the religious and human rights of the people, the Sikhs played the most important role in the politics of Northern India. They organised the most formidable resistance to hordes of foreign invaders, including Ahmad Shah Abdali, known to be the greatest general of the eighteenth century. All foreign invasions from the North West were finally stopped.

The institutions of '*Sarbat Khalsa*' and '*Gurmatta*' shaped the destiny of the Sikh people during their ascent to political power during the eighteenth century. The *Sarbat Khalsa* institution represented the unified corporate personality of the Khalsa, while *Gurmatta* signified taking decisions in the name of the Guru. Before and after the battles, the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar, performed ablutions in the sacred tank and passed regular *Gurmattas*. In 1764, on the eve of Ahmad Shah Abdali's last raid, the Sikhs passed a *Gurmatta* 'proclaiming the independence of the Sikh state'.⁷¹ The Sikh Gurdwaras were the centres of free thought and the integrated Sikh activities. In order to liquidate the Sikhs, prominent Gurdwaras were made the chief targets of attack by the enemy. Durbar Sahib, the headquarters of the Khalsa, was thrice attacked by Abdali⁷², 'as it had become in his eyes a rock of offence because of what it represented of the religious and political importance which Sikhism had acquired'.⁷³

It was deep faith in the mission of the Guru which sustained the Sikhs to bear the ordeals so bravely. A striking and an integral feature of the Sikh mission was the maintenance of the ethical standards during their militant programmes. Qazi Nur-Ud-Din bears testimony to the fact that the Sikhs never killed a coward and did not obstruct one who fled from the field of battle⁷⁴. Something which is in glaring contrast to the victorious armies of all times including the armies of the civilised world of the 20th century, is the attitude of the Sikh soldiers towards women who, according to Qazi Nur-Ud-Din, were never molested or robbed by them⁷⁵. There is ample evidence in the history that the Mughals tortured the Sikhs, whenever they fell into their hands with the cruelest available methods.⁷⁶ But the Sikhs observed ethical restraint and did not resort to these methods. Even in retaliation, they tried to follow the injunction laid down by the Gurus : 'To exercise forbearance in the midst of power; to be humble in the midst of honour.'⁷⁷ Sikh confederacies called the *Misls*, often, met at the *Akal Takhat* at Amritsar to discuss matters of common welfare and chalk out plans of joint action against their enemies. The common bond of being the Khalsa bound them together. Each *Misl* bore its own distinctive title and had its own Sirdar who gathered followers from local nearby villages.

When Ranjit Singh came to power, he did not establish a Sikh state, nor did he interfere with the religious and cultural life of the other communities. In his kingdom, the key positions of power were shared by the Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims alike. The Muslim state in India, being entirely subordinate to the church, had believed in the orthodox ideals of waging war (*jihad*) against infidels. The conversion of the entire population to Islam and the extinction of every form of dissent was the ideal of the Muslim state. According to this ideal, non-Muslims were not considered equal citizens of the state. They had to undergo political and social disabilities and pay a toll tax (*Jaziya*) to secure the right of exercising their religion.

Ranjit Singh was an enlightened and benevolent ruler, who endeared himself to all classes of people. He took keen interest

in the social and economic well being of his subjects, without any discrimination on the basis of caste or creed. While he spent money on the decoration of the Golden Temple and other Sikh *Gurdwaras*, he was no less generous in his endowments to the Hindu and the Muslim places of worship. Although the Muslims and the Sikhs had fought the bloodiest battles against each other, yet the Maharaja bore no malice to the Muslims. His most trusted minister was Fakir Aziz-ud-Din, a Muslim. In dealing with his fallen enemies, he displayed unprecedented generosity. Not only the Sikh nobles and Sardars but also the deposed Muslim nobles were provided with jagirs and treated equally and generously. He ruled for forty years but did not sentence even one person to death. His rule was known as "*Halimi Raj*" (rule of the humble). A great conqueror and a brilliant administrator, he possessed the rare combination of strength and humility.

The Maharaja was a devout Sikh and declared that he was subservient to the Khalsa discipline. He listened daily to the readings from the Granth Sahib and his official seal bore the words *Akal Sahai* meaning an invocation to God for His Grace. But he never made any forcible conversions to the Sikh faith nor did he make any conscious efforts to propagate his religion. This policy was fully in consonance with the principle of universal brotherhood and peaceful co-existence, propounded by the Sikh Gurus. Known for religious tolerance, social harmony and justice, Ranjit Singh's state was the most progressive state in India.

After the fall of the Sikh kingdom, Sikh soldiers displayed a good deal of sportsmanship. They talked of their defeat as the vagaries and chances of war. But confidence in their future destiny was never shaken. The sentiment that held them together was the deepest commitment to the faith and the nostalgic memories of the Khalsa rule.

The British Government resolved to follow a policy of justice, moderation, neutrality and toleration in accordance with the customs, feelings and prejudices of the people. No state religion was proclaimed. But religious tensions were visible due to the

machinery of conversion, set in operation by the Christian missionaries, who took advantage of the fact that Christianity was the religion of the ruling class.⁷⁸ The British used the Gurdwaras as channels for the indirect control of the Sikhs.⁷⁹ Such a policy was bound to generate tensions and discontent. All this was a portent of coming events. The Sikhs had to take up fight with the government for the freedom of the Gurdwaras and for the freedom of the country. True to their doctrine and tradition, the Sikhs played a heroic and historic role in the political life of the country.

The first revolutionary movement against the British rule, with the clear object of establishing a system of liberty, equality and fraternity in India was organised, directed and principally manned by the Sikhs. The Sikhs formed a microscopic minority in the country but their participation in the Ghadr Movement was more than 90%.⁸⁰ This was due to their age old tradition of sacrifice and martyrdom for the cause of freedom and justice.

In 1920, the Shiromni Akali Dal was established, which came to be regarded as the supreme organisation of the Sikhs. 'The religio-political struggle of the Akalis directed against the priests, *Mahants* and other vested interests in the Sikh shrines and consequently against the British imperialism—was one of the most powerful movements of modern India.⁸¹ The Akalis professed independence of any earthly leaders and acted in devotion to *Akal* (The Timeless one). They had to struggle very hard to restore the religious liberties of the Sikhs. It was, therefore, felt by the Sikh masses, who formed the backbone of the community, that the panacea for all their social, economic, political and religious ills lay in their political liberation. The Sikh masses became increasingly conscious because of subtle attack on their religious identity, made through the Government support to the *Mahants* and *Pujaris* controlling their religious shrines. The struggle lasted for several years, in which a number of *Morchas* (all launched from the Akal Takhat, Amritsar) such as *Guru Ka Bagh*, *Keys of the Golden Temple* and the *Akal Takht*, *Bhai Pheru Gurdwara* and *Gurdwara Gangsar* (Jaitu) figured prominently. After tremendous sacrifices

and sufferings, the Akali movement secured to the Sikhs, in the form of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act, an undisputed and exclusive control over their religious places. This was a great achievement because these holy places have always been the very life blood of the Sikh way of life and the extent to which these places are free has always had a strong bearing on the socio-political status of the Sikhs. Here it is necessary to state that the Jaitu Morcha, which constituted the most significant part of the Akali struggle involving death by bullets of 150, and arrest of more than 5000 persons⁸² related purely to a political issue, regarding the deposition of the Sikh Raja of Nabha. During the Jaitu Morcha, Nehru went to the extent of courting arrest along with the Akalis, as a gesture of cooperation with them.⁸³ At this time, the Congress supported the Sikh struggle for the control of their Gurdwaras. The Gurdwara Reform Movement succeeded in liberating the Gurdwaras from the control of the Government and the corrupt practices of the *Mahants* and *Pujaris*, thus re-establishing the unique religious identity of the Sikhs. The success of the Sikhs exploded the myth of the invincibility of the British power in India. This also helped to boost the confidence of the freedom fighters. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was so much impressed by the Sikhs that he advised the Hindus to baptise at least one member of their family as a Sikh, if they wanted to be free from British bondage.⁸⁴ The Gurdwara Reform Movement had political dimensions, in as much as it was a protest against the governmental interference in the Gurdwaras, in connivance with the *Mahants*.

Thus the Akali Dal emerged as a formidable force and the next phase of its struggle was directed towards the freedom of the country from the foreign yoke. The Akali leaders always utilized the religious platform for their political propaganda. The contention that never had the Sikh nation fallen so low or was in so wretched a plight as during the British rule, made the Sikhs very unhappy with the British, who were responsible for the destruction of their sovereignty and consequent backwardness and poverty. There was a feeling that the British bureaucracy was bent on

destroying the Sikh religion and its identity. The deposition of the Maharaja of Nabha, who was deemed to be pro-Sikh because of his leanings and having sponsored the Anand Marriage Act, 1909, involving separateness of Sikh *Maryada* and social custom and identity, was also considered to be a part of the plan to throttle the independence of Sikh religion. It is significant that this struggle had the backing, not only of the masses but all sections of the Sikh community.

During the Sikh struggle against the Raj, the Congress leaders never objected to the combination of religious, social and political objectives of the Akali Dal and the executing of their plans from the precincts of the Gurdwaras. In fact, when the Sikhs gained the control of the Golden Temple of Amritsar, Gandhi complimented them in the following words of his telegram : "First Battle of India's Freedom Won. Congratulations."⁸⁵ Rather the Akali's were projected in such flattering as 'the only living wing of the national movement', and 'the strongest community in India.'⁸⁶ In their statements, the Congress supported the Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C. in all their programmes and activities. On one occasion, it described the official attack on the Akali Dal as 'a direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians and a blow aimed at all movements for freedom'.⁸⁷

The unique contribution of the Sikh Gurus, in breaking the shackles of man in all fields of human endeavour, has been recognised but the great role played by the Sikh community, out of all proportion to their small numerical strength (2%), towards the country's freedom has not received the attention and recognition that it deserves. The following table would give an accurate picture of the Sikh contribution during the freedom struggle :

<i>Punishment suffered</i>	<i>Sikhs</i>	<i>Non-Sikhs</i>	<i>Total</i>
Hanged	93	28	121
Imprisoned for life	2147	449	2646
Killed at Jallianwala Bagh	799	501	1300
Killed at Budge Budge Ghat	67	46	113
Killed in Kooka Movement	91	—	91
Killed in Akali Movement	500	—	500

In the Indian National Army, led by Subash Chander Bose, 60% of the officers and soldiers were Sikhs.⁸⁹ Thus the battle for country's freedom was won, with the Sikhs in the forefront. All Sikh agitations, whether social, religious or political in character, were launched from the platform of the Gurdwaras. Not a single eyebrow, from any quarter, was raised against the use of Gurdwaras for political purpose. The Sikhs kept their martial tradition alive through the assertion of their separate religio political identity. Congregational prayers held in the Gurdwaras revived the old spirit. It brought before them the vision of the mighty deeds of their Gurus and martyrs and the sacrifices the Sikhs had made for the cause of their religion and the glory of the Sikh banners, temples and the *Panth*. This constantly reminded them of their heroic past and inspired them to forge their future with courage and confidence (*Charhdi Kala*). Here it is necessary to mention that the Akali Party and the S.G.P.C, the twin premier institutions of the Sikhs, have almost invariably been fighting for the Sikh religious, social and political objectives, not only together but also from the premises of the Gurdwaras.

Before independence, the Indian National Congress had consistently propagated a federal structure for the free India, with unilingual states and had pledged constitutional safeguards for the minorities. A committee was formed by the Congress, in 1928, under the Chairmanship of Moti Lal Nehru, to prepare a framework of the constitution for free India. In its report, the Committee upheld the principle of communal reservation for the Muslims, while denying the same to the Sikhs and the other minorities.⁹⁰ When Sikh leaders expressed apprehensions concerning their future in India, the Congress Party, in its annual session at Lahore, in 1929, passed a resolution, which said that "no future constitution would be acceptable to the Congress that did not give full satisfaction to the Sikhs."⁹¹ Such categorical assurances were repeatedly held out to the Sikhs, right upto the partition of the country. At a function in Gurdwara Sis Ganj, which was attended by Gandhi, a Sikh leader, Madhusudan Singh, voiced the fears of the Sikhs that the Congress, once in power,

might go back on its assurances to the Sikhs. Gandhi, in a bid to allay the fears of the Sikhs, declared : "I ask you to accept my word and the Resolution of the Congress that it will not betray a single individual, much less a community. Let God be the witness of the bond that binds me and the Congress to you. I venture to suggest that non-violence creed of the Congress is the surest guarantee of good faith and our Sikh friends have no reason to fear that it would betray them. For the moment it does so, the Congress would not only thereby seal its own doom but that of the country too. Moreover, the Sikhs are a brave people. They know how to safeguard their rights by the exercise of arms, if it should ever come to that."⁹²

It was in this background, and on the basis of the promises made to them that, in 1947, the Sikhs threw their lot with the other people of India, hoping that the assurances extended to them would be fulfilled and they would be able to maintain their identity and chalk out their own development in the future. Pandit Nehru declared at a press conference, on the eve of the All India Congress Committee meeting at Calcutta, in July, 1946, that the brave Sikhs of the Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in an area and a set-up in the North, wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom"⁹³ Another pledge was repeated by Nehru while moving the executive resolution at the opening Session of the Constituent Assembly in 1946. This resolution "envisaged the Indian Union as an Independent Sovereign Republic, comprising autonomous units with residuary powers, wherein the ideal of social, political and economic democracy would be guaranteed to all sections of the people and adequate safeguards would be provided for minorities and backward communities and areas." Nehru described the Revolution as a "declaration, a pledge and an undertaking before the world, a contract of millions of Indians and, therefore, in the nature of an oath, which we mean to keep."⁹⁴ In view of such assurances, the Akali Members of the legislature voted for the division of the Punjab, thereby limiting the boundary of Pakistan to Wagah, instead of its coming close to Delhi.

Throughout the pre-independence era, the Sikhs, like the Muslims, have been struggling for their identity and independence as a separate community, which envisaged no dichotomy between its religious and political interests. It is as such that they had been struggling with the British government and negotiating for their rights with the Congress or the Muslim leadership. In fact, the assurances which Gandhi gave were during the course of his speech in a meeting held at Gurdwara Sis Ganj, which, for that matter any Gurdwara, is a recognised place for politico-religious activities and deliberations of the Sikhs. Invariably, it is to represent and safeguard Sikh religious, social and political interests that Sikh leaders have been meeting the Government. And they were chosen by the Sikh bodies that were incharge of both Sikh religious and political interests namely, the S G P.C. and the Akali Party, with a common leadership. It is in this context that the British government approached the Sikhs, through Baldev Singh, who spurned the offer, because of his faith in and assurances by Gandhi and other Hindu leadership.

The Sikh history, of the pre-independence days, shows two things that the Sikhs as a homogenous community, while they have been fighting for their separate rights, have always been in the forefront of the struggle for independence of the country. Baldev Singh's refusal to have separate negotiations with the British⁹⁵ in England is an epitomic act of the Sikh political and religious ideology, namely, while all sacrifices have to be made for the cause of the community, moral and universal ends have to be supreme compared to narrow communal interests. It is in this context that the Sikhs got the biggest shock when the Congress after partition ceased to be a national body and became swayed with Hindu outlook.⁹⁶ It went back in relation to the Sikhs on both of its promises, namely to frame a federal constitution with autonomous states, empowered with all subjects, except Defence, Foreign affairs, Currency and Communication and secondly to create linguistic states, including a Punjabi speaking state in East Punjab. It was in this context that, in 1949, when the Central Government formally elicited the views of Punjab legislature on the draft

Constitution the Akali representatives reiterated their stand for a federal constitution saying: "It has been the declared policy of the Congress from the outset that India is to be the Union of autonomous States, and each unit is to develop in its own way, linguistically, culturally and socially. Of course, Defence Communication and Foreign affairs must and should remain the Central Subjects. To change the basic policy now is to run counter to the oft-repeated creed of the Congress. In the considered opinion of the Akali Dal, residuary powers should be with the States. The list distributing the legislative powers should be based on the principle that the Centre or Union Parliament should be limited to Defence, Communication and Foreign affairs."⁹⁷

Our narration of the Sikh struggle, since 1947, should be understood in the above context. Sikhs have been, in pursuance their basic principle of unity of religious and political ideals, waging a dual struggle both for the preservation of their identity, ethos and culture and for the progress and promotion of universal interests of the country, as a whole. It is important to understand that this struggle, at the two fronts has been as before in its history, fought from the platform of the Gurdwaras, by a unified party (Akali Dal), which fully represented its religious, political, economic and social interests and aspirations. Here in retrospect, it is indeed painful to record one fact of Indian history, namely, that since the days of the Cabinet Mission proposal, it is the Hindu point of view, detrimental to the national interests, that dominated the outlook of the leaders. It led to the unfortunate partition of India and has been increasingly responsible for its post-independence policies and perspectives.⁹⁸

After independence, the Indian leaders adopted a basically unitary form of constitution, thus flouting their promises made to the Sikhs. In protest, the Sikh representatives in the Constituent Assembly, refused to sign the Constitution.⁹⁹ Suddenly, the rulers discarded the concept of 'unity in diversity.' Unfortunately, diversity was made synonymous with disintegration. A sense of natural pride in one's ethnic identity or tradition came to be viewed as a threat to national unity.

Since independence the most important problem that has faced the Sikhs is that of identity and survival as a distinct community, separate from the Hindus. The Sikhs were confronted with a subtle but visible cultural domination of the Hindus. Addressing the Indian parliament, soon after independence Hukam Singh said, "The Sikhs are told, when they remind the Congress of their past pledges in 1929, 1946 and again in 1947 that circumstances have changed".¹⁰⁰

In a pamphlet, Harchand Singh Longowal expressed the Sikh apprehensions in these words: "India is a multilingual, multireligious and multi-national land. In such a land, a microscopic minority like the Sikhs, has genuine forebodings that like Buddhism and Jainism earlier, they may also lose their identity in the vast ocean of the overwhelming Hindu majority."¹⁰¹ As a result of linguistic reorganisation of the country, the Panjabi speaking PEPSU, a Sikh majority state, should have been joined to the Panjabi speaking area of Punjab but instead PEPSU was merged with Punjab. This was considered by the Sikhs as a deliberate move to reduce them to a state of political ineffectiveness, by making them a minority.

Henceforward, the Sikhs agitated and reminded the Central Government of their earlier two promises to make linguistic states and to frame a federal constitution. The Congress Government, because of its communal or narrow policies, backed out on both the issues, by framing a unitary type of constitution and denying a Panjabi speaking state in Punjab. The communal angle became almost naked when, in 1955, all other states in India, except Punjab, were re-organised on linguistic basis.¹⁰² The only reason for not creating a linguistic state in Punjab could be that the Sikhs would be in a majority in any linguistic Panjabi speaking state. In fact, this narrowmindedness became even more evident when, in 1955, instead of creating a linguistic state in Punjab, authorities applied the reverse gear by merging the Sikh majority and Panjabi speaking state of PEPSU in the Punjab, thereby forming a bilingual Punjab¹⁰³ and reducing the Sikhs to a minority therein.¹⁰⁴

The slogan of national unity and integrity has become a plea for systematically eroding cultural plurality. Democracy means a rule of the majority and in the case of India it, inevitably, means a rule of the Hindu majority, there being no safeguards for the rights of the minorities. Such majority rule, coupled with the gospel of secularism, has naturally alienated the minorities, who feel that they are being discriminated against. It is being increasingly felt that taking shelter behind the cloak of democracy and secularism, the ruling power, consisting of the majority community, often, throws all moral scruples to the winds, while framing its policies and programmes. This has led to many social and political conflicts and contradiction in the body politic. The present crisis in Punjab is the outcome of these conflicts and contradiction, which have grown alarmingly and cannot be resolved till the policy of unity and diversity is honestly accepted and implemented.

The Sikhs, being calculatedly reduced to a minority in their homeland, started a struggle for the creation of a linguistic state, as has been done in other parts of the country. This struggle, for the removal of a clear discrimination, continued peacefully, from 1948 to 1966, involving the deaths of dozens and arrests of more than 60,000 Sikhs.¹⁰⁵ It is significant that throughout this period, there was no Hindu-Sikh riot or tension in the Punjab because it was launched and run from the precincts of the Gurdwaras. This, therefore, involved a high level of moral discipline in the execution of the *Morchas*. Even though the movement continued for ten years, for the same reason, there was no sense of frustration among the Sikh masses nor any untoward symptoms like Hindu-Sikh tension in the villages and towns, on that account. The moral tone of the struggle and the patriotism of the Sikhs is evident from the fact that, in 1965, before the Indo-Pakistan War broke out, the Sikhs instead of trying to fish in troubled water, suspended their struggle and wholeheartedly joined the war.¹⁰⁶ Their contribution to the war effort, both on the field and on the supporting civilian population, has almost become a legend. But finally instead of creating a linguistic state

powers as the other states in the country, a truncated sub-state, with limited powers in the field of irrigation and hydel power, was created.¹⁰⁷ Irrigation and power are the very base on which the entire development of a state depends. But the control, creation and development of hydel power was unconstitutionally kept in the central hands, involving ultimately the drain of 75% of its river waters to non-riparian states.¹⁰⁸ This drain was something unheard of in our country, or for that matter in any country, being in violation of the provisions and guarantee in our constitution.

The Reorganisation Act of 1966 and decision there under were considered to seal the economic fate and future of Punjab. This opened the eyes of the Sikhs. Hence, started the struggle both for undoing the unconstitutional drain of the waters and hydel powers of the Punjab rivers and for autonomy, as envisaged in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, so that further encroachments on the rights of the Punjab do not take place. In fact, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was nothing new, it was just a reiteration of the Sikh demand, made in 1949, in the Punjab Assembly for implementing the promises made by the Congress in the Constituent Assembly, in 1946.¹⁰⁹ Incidentally, the Tamils for similar cultural and ethnic reasons had made the same demand for state autonomy by adopting in their Assembly in 1971, the Rajmannar report.

Thus the demand is essentially for the maintenance of Sikh religious and ethnic identity, and not for any separatist or secessionist purpose, as misrepresented by the Government. The Sikh struggle for the redressing of the discrimination and injustice thus started again. Here it is necessary to mention that whenever there was a question of fighting for universal or national cause as in case of the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars, the Sikhs always came in the forefront. In 1975, Indira Gandhi imposed the Emergency and virtually suspended the Constitution and abrogated all human and fundamental rights.¹¹⁰ All candles of liberty were blown off and the entire country was plunged into darkness on account of the Emergency. It was left to the Akali Dal to keep the torch of liberty ablaze.¹¹¹ Indira Gandhi, finding strong criticism from the

Opposition, approached the Sikhs to support her stand, in lieu of solving their problems and conceding their demands.¹¹² But the Sikhs declined to bargain, when it was a question of national or universal cause. The Akali Dal, in its meeting held at the precincts of Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, passed a resolution to start an agitation against the imposition of Emergency. Thereafter they started the 'Save Democracy Morcha', daily offering voluntary arrests.¹¹³ Throughout the period of Emergency, the Morcha was organised and conducted from the precincts of Darbar Sahib. The Morcha continued throughout the period of Emergency involving the arrests of over forty thousand Sikhs.¹¹⁴ It is significant to note that from the rest of the country not even half the number of volunteers offered arrests. The use of *Akal Takhat* for political purposes never came into question, then or later on.

After the Emergency, the elections were held and the Akalis came into power in the Punjab. They decided to follow the constitutional path and filed a case in the Supreme Court to redress their grievances, regarding river waters and hydel power. In 1980, Indira Gandhi again came into power and dismissed the Akali Ministry in the Punjab.¹¹⁵ The Akalis still stuck to the constitutional path and started negotiating with the Central Government. But towards the end of 1980, she contracted what was called a forced deal between the Congress Government of Punjab and the Haryana and Rajasthan Governments, on the other hand.¹¹⁶ Thereafter, the case pending in the Supreme Court was withdrawn and she virtually banged the door against the Akali negotiators, who were having talks on those very issues with her. All peaceful efforts to settle the issues, through the channel of the Supreme Court or through negotiations with the Central Government having been frustrated, the Sikhs again held their meetings at the Golden Temple Complex to start a struggle for their rights, leading finally to the *Dharam yudh Morcha* of 1982. This Morcha, too, as in the case of earlier Morchas, continued to be conducted from the premises of the Darbar Sahib. Both Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale lived at the Golden Temple complex, which as before continued to be the

central place of all Sikh social, political and religious deliberations, meetings, gatherings and conferences.

The above narration makes it clear that for the Sikhs the defence of universal causes and the defence of the cause of Sikh identity has not been separated and cannot be separated. Because for them both categories of causes are righteous causes, fit for the religious man and the community to struggle and make sacrifices for. A question may be raised that a state would not and should not countenance violence from wherever it should emanate. So far as the question of violence or aggression is concerned, the answer is clear enough. But for the Sikhs all righteous causes are worth fighting for in a righteous way. In the present sequence of events of 1980's three things are relevant. Sikh militancy, it has been openly asserted, had been introduced into the Sikh struggle by the Congress as a means to embarrass, divide and weaken the Akali leadership under the moderates.¹¹⁷ Secondly, it is quite well known that the violence used against the Sikhs, going to Delhi during the period of Asiad, was both unjustified and provocative.¹¹⁸ But far more provocative was the violence that took place during the course of the counter-Bandh of February 1984, when Sikh Gurdawaras, properties and *Guru Granth Sahib* were attacked and burnt and Sikh men, women and children passing through Haryana were either injured, killed or humiliated.¹¹⁹ At Amritsar the paintings of Guru Ram Dass, the founder of the city, were trampled upon.¹²⁰ This exhibition of unchecked mob violence for days on end, in Haryana, was considered by many to be a calculated provocation for the occurrence of counter-violence in Punjab, which could give the Government an opportunity to side track the Sikh demands, to undo the discrimination against them and to dub the Akali agitation as only a law and order issue. It is significant that though there were retaliatory killings in Punjab, there has never been any mob violence against the Hindus. In the above context, the 'Operation Blue Star' attack has been considered by the Sikhs simply unprovoked and purely a diversionary measure by the Government, so as to camouflage the real issues. That it has been unproductive has since been generally accepted.

The above three points do not strictly follow from the discussion of our subject yet they are relevant to the extent that, considering the Sikh world view, it is impossible for them to separate issues concerning the Sikh identity and the future of the community from socio-political issues. The history of the above struggle is a classic example of how a state, while trying to pursue its narrow cultural policies, would ultimately employ state machinery and political tools of oppression to throttle the voice of freedom and morality or of any ethnic minorities, howsoever legitimate be their grievances. The above statement also leads to the clear conclusion and corollary that ethnic and religious minorities, even though, pursuing their purely cultural, moral or religious objective, would inevitably come into conflict with a state which, for one reason or the other, is disinclined to accept their separate existence or the vocal existence of any centre, raising the call of social or moral justice.

Unwarranted delay in solving the issues of water, territory and Chandigarh led the Akali Dal to launch the 'Dharmyudh Morcha'—a battle for righteousness, not a religious war as misinterpreted by many. The Akali Dal put up a list of political, economic and religious demands. Surprisingly, the government, which had often impressed upon the Akalis to keep religion and politics apart, found it more convenient to listen to their religious grievances rather than secular grievances, involving politico-economic issues. During the course of negotiations, between the Government and the Akali Dal, the main stumbling blocks were the politico-economic issues and not the religious issues. In a sudden dramatic move, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced a unilateral award regarding religious demands. She donned a *Salwaar-Kameez*, went to Gurdwara Bangla Sahib in New Delhi, and announced that she had accepted all the religious demands of the Akalis. But these dramatic gestures did not satisfy the Akalis. However important the religio-cultural aspects of the problem were, the crisis in Punjab was intimately connected with the politico-economic issues concerning the people, the Sikhs as well as the Hindus. By making a unilateral announcement regarding the acceptance of the religious

demands, the Prime Minister had conveniently evaded the more important economic and political demands. In a write up, in the Guardian, London, Baljit Malik made an analysis of the Government's Punjab policy and observed :

"All through the tangle in Punjab, the Government has preferred to talk religion instead of economics and politics, in its dealings with the Akali party, which represents the interests of Punjabi peasants and farmers, the majority of whom are Sikhs. The farmers say, 'Give us more of our own river waters to irrigate our fields or refer the matter to the Supreme Court'. The Government replies, 'We will allow you to broadcast religious music over All India Radio, as for the water, we shall appoint a tribunal to give a ruling on the dispute'.....The Akalis say that Punjab and other states, throughout India, should be given greater economic powers and allowed to manage their own affairs. New Delhi retorts, 'This is talk of secession, it must be inspired by foreign powers.'"¹²¹

Unrest in Punjab was nothing but an embittered response against the biased and unjust policies of the Government, leading to economic erosion of the state and consequent erosion of Sikh identity. Economic-cum-political and cultural issues, which were at the root of the crisis, were relegated to the background, and Government and the government controlled media kept projecting the Sikhs as fundamentalists and secessionists. The crisis in Punjab was kept alive due to the government's failure to find a political solution. The forces of extremism were propelled to the forefront. It is widely believed that initially it was Congress (I) that encouraged Sikh militancy as a counter to the Akalis. Little did the government realise that a strong militant leadership would be more difficult to bargain with than a strong Akali leadership.

Unmindful of the consequences, the Congress leadership played its power game in a manner so as to eliminate any future political challenge either from the Akalis or the B.J.P., the two main political parties in the Punjab. Hindus were made to shift their

loyalty from the B.J.P. to the Congress (I). The pretence of a negotiated settlement of the Punjab problem was put up by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, several times but, as noted by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, 'each time the interests of Hindus of Haryana weighted more heavily with her than a settlement with Sikhs'.¹²²

This created a sharp wedge between the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab. Government made this an excuse to skip the real issues and prevent a constitutional settlement of the Punjab's legitimate grievances, regarding unconstitutional drain of 75% of its river waters and territorial and other economic and political discrimination. In view of the Asiad episode and Haryana killings, Bhindranwale attributed the escalation of violence to the engineered attacks on the Sikhs and Government policies of repression. As noted by M.J. Akbar, the most unique thing about the long tale of violence in Punjab from 1981 to June 1984 was that, "despite all this provocation and opportunity, despite all the engineered tension and suspicion, there was no outbreak of mass mayhem and rioting on the 1947 pattern.....any such riots would have led to massacres".¹²³ The phenomena of 'extremism' in Punjab have to be viewed in the context of policies that made at sheer repression and intimidation, without providing justice. Baljit Malik observed : 'The Congress Party's obsession with power, its dwindling standards of political behaviour and its aversion to losing elections, is what led it to become the mid-wife of extremism and terrorism in the Punjab.'¹²⁴ The Akalis, often, alleged that the Congress was breeding terrorism in the Punjab to defame the Sikhs and hide the real underlying issues.

The Indian polity has failed to establish its credentials as a dispenser of justice and fair play. The political climate in the country has been vitiated by wide spread corruption, pseudo-secularism and short-sighted and even communal policies, aimed at electoral gains. Erosion of moral values and lack of vision and direction are at the root of prevailing chaos and uncertainty. Such trends are essentially the manifestations of a national trauma—the trauma of shattered values and convictions. The position to-day is, as observed by Syed Mir Qasim, Ex-Congress

Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, "If a referendum was held in 1948, about 70 percent would have voted for Pakistan. To-day it would be 90 percent."¹²⁵ And, in the other border state, the Sikhs who made the greatest sacrifice and defiantly declined good offers from Jinnah, on the basis of the unambiguous promises of the Congress leaders are seriously voicing the slogan of Khalistan. As stated earlier, it is obvious that it is the influence of communal considerations that made the leaders of the Congress reject, in 1946, a solution that would have maintained the integrity and unity of India, as it had existed before. In the North West, it was purely the signal achievement of the Sikh movement that had after a thousand years not only stopped all future invasions but had also securely carried the boundaries of India beyond Peshawar. Leaders of N.W.F.P., Nationalist Muslims and the Sikhs were deeply dismayed, when Gandhi supported the move to accept partition of India. The western borders were moved from Peshawar to Wagah and would have been nearer Delhi if the Sikhs had not categorically declined the offers of Jinnah. It is the irony of history that the Sikhs, the strongest opponents of partition, not only suffered the greatest uprooting and migration in history involving colossal loss of innocent men, women and children and their properties but are again today at the receiving end, being dubbed as fundamentalists, separatists and sectarian. Prevarication apart, the fact is that the credibility of Indian leadership, in regard to its integrity, motives and lack of communal bias is so low, that the religious, cultural and ethnic minorities feel seriously threatened.

The Sikhs, known for their unmatched valour and patriotism, can also prove to be the bravest element in exposing injustice, perpetrated under the camouflage of secularism and democracy. India's salvation lies in the willing sacrifices and patriotism she can command from its people, but not in police and military action against its own people and their religious places, involving the killing of thousands of them. Large scale killings of its own people and use of tanks and guns against them is a known feature of centralised dictatorships but not of democracies perceptive to

the feelings and aspirations, of all sections of their peoples. This will only drain all capacity for progress. The strength of the country is not shown by the battles fought against her own people. Respect for authority can be commanded through wisdom and statesmanship and not demanded through the use of guns. The so-called guardians and representatives of democracy in India have committed the fatal mistake of confusing unmitigated repression with display of strength and firmness. Opportunistic politics, stripped of morals and faith, have led to the failure of both secularism and democracy. There is an ethical and moral vacuum all around. And there is nothing left to fill the vacuum, so created.

Conclusion :

Not only India but a large part of the world is in a flux. Profound changes and stirring events taking place in China, Russia, Poland, Iran and Afghanistan suggest that people all over the world are in desperate search of some canons of morality, fair-play and justice. At the moment, the world of old ideas is tottering under its own weight. A world of new ideas granting dignity, equality and human rights to its own people is yet to be born. The pervasive moral degradation is at the root of the problem.

The 20th century has seen an astonishing diversity of ideas and ideologies, ranging from the speculative thought of liberalism, on the one hand, to the scientific materialistic socialism of Marx, on the other. Freud, one of the most influential figures of the 20th century, was an atheist and was deeply influenced by the positivism of the French philosopher Comte. His theories about religion rest on the positivist claim that all knowledge comes through science. He described religion as the 'the universal obsessionist neurosis of humanity.'¹²⁶ But others questioned how far science had actually led to human welfare. They argued that the evils of the Industrial Revolution and urbanisation far outweighed its benefits. Arnold Toynbee, the eminent historian, suggested that the great world religions had been

replaced in the modern times by three new ideologies—nationalism, communism and individualism. Nationalism was an ideology of tribe exclusiveness, which eventually came to be identified with militarism, imperialism and racism.¹²⁷ A hostility to all religion was the central theme in Marxism-Leninism.¹²⁸ Some of its unsavoury aspect were curtailment of individual freedom and excessive or centralised state control. In a recent article entitled, 'Collapse of a World View', Ashish Nandy makes a good analysis of the recent events in China. He writes, "The tragedy of China cannot be explained away as only an expression of the blood thirstiness of its rulers. It symbolises the failure of a World-View."¹²⁹ No wonder, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky declared that socialism and communism are a deadly prelude to atheism and materialism. The American liberalism was reflected in a rugged individualism.¹³⁰ It emphasised freedom but classical Economics and Social Darwinism reduced liberalism to a self-seeking, self-serving and highly profit—oriented competitive individualism, in which strong people dispossess and destroy the weak. While people are still arguing over the value and validity of these ideologies, there is no denying the fact that all of them have failed to meet the need and the challenge of the times. Growing international tensions, escalation in the arms race and the two world wars have brought nothing but frustration and disillusionment in the minds of people. An internationally known political scientist, Rajni Kothari, says that 'there is a moral vacuum all over, arising out of the decline of all visions'.¹³¹ He believes that the phenomenon of religious upsurge, seen in the recent years, is a part of the world wide process of liberation from the shackles of modernity and secularism. He adds, "It is not surprising at all that in large parts of the world, including our own, there is this fundamentalist revival or revolt against modernity. In some ways this is a search for a more authentic identity than is provided by the homogenising gospel of modernity".¹³² He adds that 'India's distinctive role lies first in working out its own transition towards a post-modern, post-secular social order, the second in providing clues to the rest of

the world in dealing with their own crises'.¹⁸³ The secularism, which is unconcerned about, if not actually hostile to Dharma, has shaken the moral foundations of our society.

Secularisation has posed even a bigger threat to the religious identity and future of small communities like the Sikhs. It has been looked upon as a subtle weapon to destroy all dissent. While the majority community, by virtue of its numerical superiority, can imbibe its religious symbols in the day-to-day functioning of the state, the religious aspirations of the minorities are sought to be crushed in the name of secularisation. Here it will not be out of place to record the views expressed by representatives of the Christian Churches at their world meets and conferences. The American view was that there are three realities : Christianity, other religions and secularism, and that these three realities can be either allies or enemies. It was argued that Christians had to choose whether they were to ally themselves with the other religions against secularism. The Americans, especially the Boston personalities, who were leading the debate at the time took the view that secularism is a common danger for all religions and therefore, there must be an alliance of all religions to fight secularism. European theologians particularly Barth, Brunner and Kramer, took a totally different view. They maintained that secularization, not secularism, is the primary process. It is a process in which some of the values of Christian faith have been put into a secular framework, bringing about a powerful force, which is destroying all old ideas. Hence secularization is an ally, because it will destroy Hinduism, Islam and other forms of what they considered to be superstition. So we should ally ourselves with secularization and see it as the work of God'. That was Bonhoeffer's Barth's and Kramer's point of view. That is why at the World Council of Churches it was almost impossible to begin any kind of dialogue.

Man, in his search for utopia, has not yet invented a form of political machinery which the ingenuity of the devil would not find a way of exploiting for evil ends. But in a world, ridden by materialism and plagued by poverty, social injustice and racial

discrimination and oppression, religion, and morals can still play an important role in bringing humanity into a greater experience of love, freedom, peace and justice.

It has been proved beyond doubt that politics, without religious and moral backing, is pure opportunism. Likewise, religion without socio-political responsibility, is simple negativism. But the three elements, politics, religion and morality, must be kept in proper relationship and delicate balance. Self-realisation being the aim of human life, all human activities must have a moral base. Some of the hindrances in the way of social salvation are exploitation, discord and injustice and all these are political in nature. Without the moral basis supplied by religion, man cannot come out of this malaise. Human happiness depends on full opportunity for the mental, moral and spiritual growth of the individual, in a healthy socio-political environment.

The Gurus regarded it as their moral duty to fight not only social injustice but also political oppression. They organised their followers to achieve the ethical ideals of human freedom and equality. Their fight for religious and political freedom is a unique phenomenon in the history of India. They placed the Sikhs in the vanguard of a socio-political revolution—a revolution which captured the imagination of the people all over the country.

In the vision of the Sikh Gurus, a sane human society is essentially a plural one, in which every one is afforded the opportunity to work out his genius to his fullest possibilities and potentialities, without any interference by any outside authority. The role of a state in enforcing a particular faith on the people is violative of man's inherent desire for freedom. In Sikhism, there is no corpus of civil and political laws of divine sanction. Nor do the Sikhs have an ordained priestly class, who can rule in accordance with the laws of divine origin or sanction.

Throughout Guru Granth Sahib, a Sikh is conceived of as an individual, passionately devoted to freedom, justice and Dharma. His Dharma is not confined or limited in its operation within a narrow sphere. It is universal, the echo of which is heard in the

daily Sikh prayer : 'May God bless the entire humanity (*Sarbi da Bhala*)'. Sikhism is thus committed to the brotherhood of man. Its basic theme is that the inward and the outward, religion and politics are inextricably interwoven. Thus, it stresses that the external order must be preserved by moral and ethical imperatives, and by abiding values that constitute 'Dharma'. Sikhism, inspired by the integrated perception of the Gurus, can usher in a new era of hope for mankind, confronted with manifold challenges, the biggest of them being the prospect of nuclear annihilation.

It is the faith of the Sikh Gurus that religion and all aspects of social life, including economic and political, cannot be separated. In fact, it is the lesson of Sikh history that the separation of religion and politics will not only mean their enervation and atrophy but also lead to stark materialism, individualism and chaos in the social life of man. The history of the Sikh struggle, from the times of the Gurus to-date, gives us the clear lesson that the combination of both aspects of life is not only most fruitful but also essential.

References

1. Iqbal, Muhammad; *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (London, 1934), pp. 155 and 166.

2. "ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਸਚੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥

ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਲੋਅ ਸਚੇ ਆਕਾਰ ॥

ਸਚੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਕਰਣੇ ਸਰਬ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥

ਸਚੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹਿ ॥

ਇਹ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥

3. ਮਾਣਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਦੁਲੰਭੁ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 751;

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਜੀਅਨੁ ਸੋਚੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 785;

ਮਨ ਬਚ ਕ੍ਰਮਿ ਰਾਮਨਾਮੁ ਚਿਤਾਰੀ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 916;

ਨਾਨਕ ਫੁਲਾ ਸੋਦੀ ਵਾੜਿ ਖਿੜਿਆ ਹਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਜਿਉ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 1095.

4. "You wear necklaces, put sacrificial marks on your foreheads, carry two *dhotis*, and put towels on your heads. If you know God's designs, you would know that yours is verily a vain religion."

—Macauliffe, M. A. ;

The Sikh Religion, Vol. I,
(Delhi, 1963), p. 237;

"The Qazi telleth lies and eateth filth, The Brahmin taketh life and then batheth. The ignorant jogi knoweth not the way of union with God-

The whole three ruin the world."

—Macauliffe, M. A.; *Ibid.*, p. 338;

"The sense of high and low, and of caste and colour; such are the illusions created in man."

Guru Granth, p. 1243, trans. by Gopal Singh, Vol. IV,
p. 1188.

5. Jagjit Singh; *The Sikh Revolution* (Chandigarh, 1981), pp. 136-38.
6. Daljeet Singh; *Sikhism-A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism* (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 194-97.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
8. ਆਪੀਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੇ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 463.

9. ਆਦਿ ਕਉ ਬਿਸਮਾਦੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ, ਕਥੀਅਲੇ ਸੁੰਨ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਲੀਆ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 940;

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ.....॥
ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥
—Guru Granth, pp. 1035-36.
10. ਆਪ ਖੜੋਵਹਿ ਆਪਿ ਕਰਿ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪਾਹੁ ॥
Guru Granth, p. 788;

ਸਭ ਕੈ ਮਧਿ ਅਲਿਪਤੋ ਰਹੈ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 234.
11. ਹਰਿ ਬਿਅੰਤੁ ਹਉ ਮਿਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਵਰਨਉ ਕਿਆ ਜਾਨਾ ਹੋਏ ਕੈਸੇ ਰੇ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 612.
12. ਕਾਇਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਵਸਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਆਪੇ ਰਸ ਭੋਭੀ ॥
ਆਪਿ ਅਤੀਤੁ ਅਲਿਪਤੁ ਹੈ ਨਿਰਜੋਗੁ ਹਰਿ ਜੋਗੀ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 514;

ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਇ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਇਅਨੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਅਲਗੁ ਆਪਾਰੁ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 937.
13. ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ ॥ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਸਭਨੀ ਥਾਈ ਤਾ ਭਉ ਕੇਹਾ ਕਾੜਾ ਜੀਉ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 103.
14. Dasgupta, S. ; *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi, 1975),
p. 17-18.
15. ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਨੀਤ ਨਵਾ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਚਾਤਾਰੁ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 660.

ਦੀਨ ਦਰਦ ਦੁਖ ਭੰਜਨਾ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਨਾਥ ਅਨਾਥ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 263-64.
16. ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥

.....
ਜਿਵ ਜਿਵ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਵੈ ਤਿਵ ਕਾਰ ॥ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਿਰਜੈ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
—Guru Granth, p. 8;

Nirankar the formless commands the way of truth,
He who made creation and rules it with delight.”
Archer, John Clark ; *The Sikhs* (Princeton, 1966), p. 132.

17. ਦੀਨ ਦਰਦ ਦੁਖ ਭੋਜਨਾ ਘਟਿ ਨਾਥ ਅਨਾਥ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, pp. 263-64;

ਅੰਧੁਲੇ ਟਿਕ ਨਿਰਧਨ ਧਨੁ, ਪਾਇਓ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਨਿਕ ਗੁਨੀ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 830.

18. *Guru Granth*, p. 1.

19. ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਹੋਤੇ ਰੇਖ ਨ ਕਾਈ ਤਾ ਸਬਦਿ ਕਹਾ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ ॥

.....ਕਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਪਸਿ ਸਾਚਾ ॥

ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਤਉ ਅਕੁਲੀਣਿ ਰਹਤਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਸੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਗਉਨੁ ਗਗਨੁ ਜਬ ਤਬਹਿ ਨ ਹੋਤਉ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਜੋਤਿ ਆਪੇ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥

ਵਰਨੁ ਭੋਖੁ ਅਸਰੂਪੁ ਸੁ ਏਕੋ ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਿਡਾਣੀ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, pp. 945-46.

20. Translation of *Asa Ragni* (Nanak from *Guru Granth*).

Cunnigham, J.D.; *History of the Sikhs* (Delhi, 1966), p. 334.

21. "Touch not the feet of those, Who call themselves *gurus* and *pirs*, and go about begging.

They who catch the fruit of their own labour and share it with others are the people, Nanak, who have found the right way."

Vcr Sarang, Translation, Teja Singh; *Essays In Sikhism* (Lahore, 1944), p. 24.

22. "There can be no love of God without active service." *Japji*, Translation, Teja Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 20.

23. ਹਾਥ ਪਾਉ ਕਰਿ ਕਾਮੁ ਸਭੁ ਚੀਤੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

Guru Granth, p. 1376;

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥

—*Guru Granth*, p. 522.

24. "It is by woman, the condemned one, that we are conceived, and from her we are born; it is with her that we are betrothed and married.

It is woman we befriend, and she who keeps the race going; When one woman dies, another is sought for; it is with her that we get established in society.

Why should we call her inferior who gives birth to great men?"

Aasa-di-Var

Translation by Teja Singh; *op. cit.*, p. 65.

25. *Ibid*, p. 24,
26. ਨਾ ਤੂ ਆਵਹਿ ਵਸਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਘਿਣਾਵਣੇ ॥
—*Guru Granth*, p. 962.
27. ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ । ਤਾਂ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
—*Guru Granth*, p. 26.
28. "Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is true living."
Sri Rag, Translation, Teja Singh; *op. cit.*, p. 23.
29. "Indian fatalism, whether the root or the foliage of Hinduism is plainly an essential part of the growth. The scriptural injunctions to pursue the *Dharma* of one's caste and condition uncomplainingly, to cultivate the capacity to act without desire, the interpretation of life as a necessary trial with the verdict contained in a subsequent incarnation, all make of indifference the ultimate Hindu virtue. The whole system of caste nourishes resignation."
Segal, Ronald; *The Crises of India* (Bombay, 1968), p. 126.
30. ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ।
—*Guru Granth*, p. 522.
31. ਆਪਿ ਸਤਿ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਸਤਿ ॥
—*Guru Granth*, p. 294;
ਕਾਇਆ ਹਰਿਮੰਦਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਵਸੈ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥
—*Guru Granth*, p. 1059.
ਨਾਨਕ ਫੁਲਾ ਸੰਦੀ ਵਾੜਿ ਖਿੜਿਆ ਹਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਜਿਉ ॥
—*Guru Granth*, p. 1095.
32. Gupta, H. R.; *The Sikh Gurus*, Vol. I (Delhi, 1989), p. 102.
33. Teja Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
34. *Guru Granth*, p. 74.
35. Ray, Niharranjan; *The Sikh Gurus and The Sikh Society* (Patiala, 1970), p. 68.
36. *Guru Granth*, p. 360, 417-18.
37. Bannerjee, Indubhushan; *Evolution of The Khalsa*, Vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1963), p. 163.

38. Macauliffe, M.A.; *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 141.
39. *Guru Granth*, pp. 1289-90.
40. *Guru Granth*, pp. 360, 417 and 722.
41. Ray, Niharranjan; *op. cit.*, p. 61.
42. *Guru Granth*, p. 1412.
43. Daljeet Singh; *op. cit.*, p. 268.
44. Iqbal, Muhammad; *Bange-i-Dara*.
45. Archer, John Clark; *op. cit.*, p. 61.
46. Bannerjee, Indubhushan; *op. cit.*, Vol. I, P. 162.
47. "The compilation of the Granth was a process at once indicative in itself of what Sikhism was to be. Arjan, the compiler, was an observant, keen and sound critic of all about him, and the trend of practicality and realism in his movement was proving stronger than tendencies toward the mystical and negative."
- Archer, John Clark; *op. cit.*, p. 150.
48. Narang, G. C.; *Transformation of Sikhism* (Lahore, 1946), p. 74.
49. Archer, John Clark; *op. cit.*, p. 59.
50. "A situation was arising in which a conflict between the forces of the state and those of Sikhism was becoming more or less inevitable. The state could not but regard the Sikh organisation as one of immense possibilities which might at one time become a rallying point of disaffection."
- Bannerjee, Indubhushan; *op. cit.*, p. 266.
51. Daljeet Singh; *op. cit.*, p. 271.
52. Macauliffe, M. A.; *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 99;
- Archer, John Clark; *op. cit.*, p. 171.
53. Archer, John Clark; *Ibid.*
54. Bannerjee, Indubhushan; *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 266.
55. Sarkar, J. N.; *A Short History of Aurangzeb* (Calcutta, 1928), p. 156.

56. Gupta, H. R.; *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 163.
57. "Such steps amounted to the declaration of a parallel government and marked an open change in the external character of the movement."
Jagjit Singh; *The Sikh Revolution*
(Chandigarh, 1981), p. 266.
58. Timur Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali's son, quoted by Bannerjee, A. C., *Journal of Sikh Studies* Vol. III, No. 1 (Amritsar, February 1976), p. 61.
59. Gupta, H. R ; *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 215.
60. Bannerjee, I.B.; *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 159.
61. Macauliffe, M.A.; *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 312-13.
62. Pannikar, K.M.; *Hindu Society at Cross Roads* (Bombay, 1955), p. 18.
63. In order to emphasize the complete independence and separateness of the Sikh ideology, Guru Gobind Singh introduced the *Nash* doctrine, involving *Kirtnash*, *Kulnash*, *Dharamnash* and *Karamnash* i.e. forsaking of all those beliefs, prejudices and traditions that stood in the way of the sole worship of the Supreme Being.
For details see :
Cunningham, J. D.; *op. cit.* , p. 64;
Bannerjee, I. B; *op. cit.* , Vol. II, p. 116;
Also Daljeet Singh; *op. cit.* , pp. 285-86.
64. Cunningham, J. D.; *op. cit.*, p. 60.
65. *Ibid*, p. 80.
66. Ganda Singh; (ed.) *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 188.
67. Jagjit Singh; *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 143 and 145.
68. Ganda Singh; *Banda Singh Bahadur* (Patiala, 1974), p. 242;
Punjab Census Report, (1868 *The Punjab Past and Present*, October 1974), p. 347.
68. Gupta, Hari Ram; *History of Sikhs*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1978), p. 38.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
71. Archer, John Clark; *op. cit.*, p. 232.
72. Madanjit Kaur; *The Harimandir*, published in Fauja Singh (ed); *The City of Amritsar* (New Delhi, 1978), p. 32.
73. Archer, John Clark; *op. cit.*, p. 12.
74. *Jagnameh* quoted by Gupta, Hari Ram; *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1978), p. 171.
75. *Ibid.*
76. Bhangu, Rattan Singh; *Prachin Panth Parkash* (ed.) by Veer Singh, Bhai; (Amritsar, 1962), pp. 226-27.
77. *Guru Granth*, p. 85.
78. Clark, Robert; *Thirty years of Missionary Work in Punjab and Sindh* (Lahore, 1833), pp. 3, 4, 44 and 45; *Letters of Queen Victoria 1837-1861*, Vol. II (London, 1908), pp. 68-69.
79. Teja Singh; *op. cit.*, pp. 179-180.
80. These figures are based on the details of the punishments awarded by the British to the Ghadrities, given by Jagjit Singh, in *Ghadr Party Lehr* (Delhi, 1970), pp. 164-170; Puri, Rajinder; *Rediscovery of India* (New Delhi, 1989), p. 107.
81. Mohinder Singh; *The Akali Movement* (Delhi, 1978), p. 137.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 73;
Puri, Rajinder; *op. cit.*, p. 117;
Teja Singh *op. cit.*, p. 197.
83. Gopal, S.; *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. I (Delhi, 1972), pp. 369-86.
84. Duggal, Devinder Singh; *The Truth About The Sikhs* (Amritsar, n.d.), 14.
85. *Confidential Papers of Akali Movement*, p. 11.
86. Mohinder Singh; *op. cit.*, p. 140.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

88. Duggal, Devinder Singh ; *op. cit.*, p. 16.

The author has taken these figures from Maulana Azad; Puri, Rajinder; *op. cit.*, p. 121;

Satinder Singh; *Khalistan, An Academic Analysis* (New Delhi, 1982), p. 64;

Bharat Mukti Morcha, Punjab; *The Sikh Case* (Chandigarh, 1989), p. 1.

89. *Ibid*, Duggal, Puri, Satinder Singh and Bharat Mukti Morcha.

90. Nayar, Baldev Raj; *Minority Politics in the Punjab* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 145-46;

Dhillon Gurdarshan Singh; *Evolution of The Demand For a Sikh Homeland*, a paper published in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. XXXV, October-December 1974, No.4, p. 365.

91. *Young India*, Bombay, March 19, 1931; Puri, Rajinder; *op. cit.* p. 122.

92. *Young India*, Bombay, March 19, 1931.

93. *The Statesman*, Calcutta, July 7, 1946; Puri, Rajinder; *op. cit.*, p. 122.

94. Duggal, Devinder Singh; *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21;

The Council of Sikh Affairs; *The Anguish of Punjab* (Chandigarh, n.d.), p. 4.

95. Baldev Singh is said to have discussed the pros and cons of this confidential offer with Jawahar Lal Nehru and in deference to the sentiments of the latter, declined to stay back and came to India after releasing the following message to the Press, "The Sikhs have no demands to make on the British except the demand that they should quit India. Whatever political rights and aspirations the Sikhs have, they shall have them satisfied through the goodwill of the Congress and the majority community."

Kapur Singh; *Some Documents on the Demand for the Sikh Homeland* (Chandigarh, 1969), pp. 30-31.

96. "The only difference between the Congress and the Hindu Maha Sabha is that the latter is crude in its utterances and brutal in the actions while the Congress is politic and polite. Apart from this fact, there is no other difference between the Congress and the Hindu Maha Sabha."

Ambedkar, B.R.; *Pakistan or The Partition of India* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 30 and 90;

Shakir, Moir; *Khilafat to Partition* (New Delhi, 1970), p. 163.

97. The Council of Sikh Affairs, Chandigarh;

The Anguish of Punjab-II-Sikhs Demand Justice (Chandigarh, n.d.) p. 25.

98. *Transfer of Power*, Vol. IX, pp. 1013-14;

Seervai, H. M.; *Partition of India: Legend And Reality* (Bombay, 1989), p. 108;

Akbar, M.J.; *Nehru The Making of India* (London, 1988), p. 275.

99. The Council of Sikh Affairs ; *op. cit.*, p. 5.

100. Duggal, Devinder Singh ; *op. cit.*, p. 30.

101. Tully, Mark and Jacob, Satish; *op. cit.*, p. 51.

102. *The Tribune*, October 1 and 10, 1955 ; Government of India ; *Report of the States Reorganisation Commission* (1955), pp. 153-56.

103. *The Tribune*, October 10, 1955; Govt. of India; *Ibid*.

104. Ashok Mehta, Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party, expressed his deep anguish at the Government's reluctance to create a Punjabi speaking State, demanded on the basic linguistic principle. Participating on the debate on the States Reorganisation Bill, he observed: "It is amazing to find that while a great minority community is sought to be integrated, another great community, the majority community is not prepared even in a region to accept the position of a minority. How are we going to integrate a minority on the body politic of

our country. If every where in every condition, in every position, in every state, in every circumstances, the majority community insists upon being majority."

The Shiromoni Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee; *Punjabi Suba Demand* (Amritsar, 1966), p. 17;

Gandhi, Indira; *My Truth* (New Delhi, 1981), p. 177-18.

105. Duggal, Devinder Singh; *op. cit.*, p. 29.
106. *The Tribune*, September 9 and 10, 1955 ; S.G.P.C.; *Punjabi Suba Demand* (Amritsar, 1966), P. 16.
107. "The Congress found itself in a dilemma. To concede the Akali demand would mean abandoning the position to which it was firmly committed and letting down its Hindu supporters in the Punjabi Suba." Gandhi, Indira ; *op. cit.*, p. 117; See also Hukam Singh's article in *Indian Express*, April, 11, 1983.
108. Government of India; *The Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966* (Delhi 1967);
The Tribune, June 9, 1966;
 Kapur Singh; *Betrayal of the Sikhs* (Delhi, 1966), pp. 3-4 11, 12 and 13.
109. The Council of Sikh Affairs, Chandigarh; *op. cit.*, p. 25.
110. *Indian Express*, June 26, 1975;
The Times of India, June 26, 1975;
The Tribune, July 10, 1975.
111. "This would make the Akali protest, which operated from the Gurdawaras, the most sustained opposition to the Emergency offered anywhere in India."
 Jeffery; Robin; *What's Happening in India* (London, 1986), p. 116.
112. Tully, Mark and Jacob, Satish; *op. cit.*, p. 75.
113. *The Tribune*, July 10, 1975;
 Tully, Mark and Jacob, Satish, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75;
 Jeffery, Robin; *op. cit.*, p. 116.

114. Gulshan, Dhanna Singh; *Aj Da Punjab Te Sikh Rajniti* (Rampura Phul, n.d.), p. 280.
115. Jeffery, Robin: *op. cit.*, p. 198.
116. Dhillon, G. S.; *Roots of the Current Punjab Crisis (1966-1982)* in *The Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, February 1987, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, p. 89.
117. Jully, Mark and Jacob, Satish; *op. cit.*, pp. 60-62, 121; Bhattacharjee, Ajit; *Towards an Impersonal Polity*, *Indian Express*, June 14, 1983;
The Council of Sikh Affairs, Chandigarh; *op. cit.*, p. 7.
118. Tully, Mark and Jacob, Satish; *op. cit.*, pp. 86-87;
Aurora, J. S., Khushwant Singh, Arun Shourie et. al.; *The Punjab Story* (Delhi, 1981), p. 98; *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, April 10, 1983.
119. Dharam, S.S.; *The Only Option For Sikhs* (no place of publication mentioned, 1984), p. 2 ; Gupta; Shekhar and Thukral, Gobind; *Punjab Anguish and Anger in India Today*. Delhi, March 15, 1984, pp. 20-21.
120. Ibid., Gupta, Shekhar; *The Spread of Terrorism*, in *India Today*, Delhi, April 30, 1984.
121. *The Guardian*, London, June 8, 1984.
122. Tully, Mark and Jacob, Satish; *op. cit.* p. 91.
123. Akbar, M.J. ; *India The Siege Within* (London, 1985), p. 199.
124. *The Guardian*, London, June 8, 1984.
125. Narayanan, V. N.; *An Alliance of Non-Parties in The Tribune*, June 21, 1989.
126. Thiselton, C. Anthony; *An Age of Anxiety* in Dowley, Tim (ed.) *Eerdman's Handbook to the History of Christianity* (Michigan, 1987), p. 601.
127. Pierad, Richard; *An Age of Ideology*, *Ibid.*, pp. 570-71.
128. *Ibid.*

129. Nandy, Ashish; *Collapse of a World View* in *Indian Express*, July 29, 1989.
130. Pizred Richard; *op. cit.*, pp. 570-71.
131. Kothari, Rajni; *Savaraj In Ideas : Comments and Communication* in Barlingay, S. S. and Rajendra Prasad (ed.), *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XI. No. 4, October-December 1984, p. 567.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 568.
133. *Ibid.*

Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon

Reader in History, Punjab University,

Chandigarh-160015

House No. 2059, Sector 15-C,

Tele. 33145

Tract No. 414 printed with the help and co-operation of :—

1. Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Patiala.
2. Sri Guru Singh Sabha Piru Manoor Cochin.
3. Gurbani Parchar Kendra, Hoshiarpur.
4. Sri Guru Kalangidhar Sewak Jatha, Bikaner.
5. Baba Teja Singh Trust, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi.
6. S. Gurcharn Singh, Jagraon.
7. S. Baldev Singh and Sons, Jagraon.
8. Giani Avtar Singh Nurani Jyoti Art Press, Jagraon.
9. S. Surjit Singh, Surjit Kaur, New Basti, Jagraon.
10. S. Man Singh, Joyti Nagar, New Delhi.
11. S. Inder Singh, New Prem Nagar, Ludhiana.
12. Bibi Kashmir Kaur wife of S. Bachan Singh Vinipeg, Canada.
13. S. Narinderpal Singh, Nirmal Vihar, New Delhi.
14. S. Daljit Singh Niamatpur, Distt. Burdwan, W.B.
15. S. Gurcharan Singh, Indian Automobiles, Kurnul, A. P.
16. Capt. Hargobind Singh, Gobind Nagar, Dehradun.
17. S. Inderjit Singh, Sarabha Nagar, Ludhiana.
18. S. Joginder Singh, Boora Singh Wala, Patiala.

Subscription of the Mission

India

Annual Rs. 20/-

Life Membership Rs. 150/-

Other Countries

Ordinary Rs. 300/-

By Air Mail Rs. 500/-

Published in Collaboration with Academy of Sikh Religion & Culture Patiala and Guru Nanak Dev Vidyak Society Patiala.

Dr. Gurdarshan Singa Dhillon is a well known writer on Sikhism and Sikh History. He has written number of books, articles and tracts. Guru Nanak Dev Mission, Patiala has already published some of his books and tracts and this is the third book written by him which is being published. The Mission is grateful to him for allowing it to publish his books.

This book i.e. Religion & Politics : The Sikh Prospective deal with the subject of Miri & Piri Traditions in Sikhism. In a scholarly way and purely from an Academician's point of view he has very lucidly dealt with the subject covering the salient features of Sikh Religion & History in this respect.

The Mission is also grateful to S. Gian Singh who has read the proof of the book.

Guru Nanak Dev Mission,
Patiala.